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ABSTRACT

A library specialist and a computer specialist were asked to collaborate to solve the problem of a growing and diversified in-house, technical library in a diversified agribusiness organization. A computer program was written to: (1) generate alphabetical catalogs of collections; (2) index documents by uniterms; and (3) to retrieve documents by index terms. Books, periodicals, and documents can be rapidly indexed, updated, added, or deleted; and printouts of the latest holdings can be obtained instantaneously. (EMH)

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THE DESIGN AND EARLY USE OF AN INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM FOR A GROWING DIVERSIFIED AGRIBUSINESS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY

by

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THE DESIGN AND EARLY USE OF AN INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM FOR A GROWING DIVERSIFIED AGRIBUSINESS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY

ABSTRACT

Shows how a computerized library network grew from the coll oration of a library specialist and a computer specialist: a single, interactive, minicomputer-based program is used to generate alphabetic catalogs of collections, to index docume by uniterms, and to browse through collections aided by thre retrieval techniques: how at the entry level in a library o only 1,000 documents, the network not only serves users with specialized interests, but also acts as a nucleus for a gene company-wide network to include all information found in a l diversified, agribusiness community.

The Peavey Company is a Minneapolis based diversified agribu ness organization which began as a flour milling company 10 years ago. Although it is still very much in the flour and milling business, the company began to diversify and expand several years ago when it acquired Brownberry Ovens, Northwo Fabrics, and Fish Building Supply.

The Peavey Corporate Information Center Library (CICL), bega a department five years ago and was involved directly and in rectly in furnishing information and a variety of data in co nection with the company's diversification and expansion men tioned above.

CICL came into existence as a brand new company operation c
with the responsibility of building a company industrial lib
of books, documents, periodicals and other pertinent informa
in the traditional sense. Intrinsic to the fulfillment of t
charge has been the need for CICL to keep up with the new te
nical interests and information demands brought about by the
company's diversification and expansion. Building a library
collection to serve the information challenges of clients wi
very specialized interests functioning in a variety of busin
endeavors continues to be a challenge.

In a growing, diversified, agribusiness company, where geogr
ical decentralization exists between corporate headquarters
other divisions, the problems of communicating library and
technical information from a Corporate Information Center li
can be lessened by the use of a minicomputer-based program i
library operations as described in this paper.

The principle of synergy or combined action states that it i
"the effect of two or more elements working together which e
ceeds, by an unpredictable order of magnitude, the sum of the
effects achieved separately."

This paper deals with the "working together" of a library spe
ist and a computer specialist in the early design and use of
automated library system for the purpose of providing an effi
cient information service to a technical business community.

Timing is significant in that a "go ahead" decision to au was made by the librarian when the collection was still easy to handle and control. Far from the position when "10, documents are housed" as often advised by experts, a compu program was developed and experimentally put into operatio the beginning of CSCS's formation. The librarian submitte report proposal to the company entitled An Automated Libra Catalog and Retrieval System. The forward of this 1971 re stated that "the librarian, in concert with the electronic processing professional, will be offering the following in vative concepts of a mechanized data base library for the Company."

Quoting from the forward of the 1971 report proposal as to the groundwork for today's subject was formulated.

> The following pages are a proposal for an Automated Library Catalog and Retrieval System based upon the periodicals, books, documents, pamphlets, and other items of information within the research technical library system, as well as other pertinent sources of information within the company (for example, specific company files, letters, company reports, etc.) .... It would be possible to obtain information printed out in various forms.... all books could be printed out by author in book form for use at each individual's desk. This capability would bring the entire book holdings to an individual's attention. Such a system would be capable of retrieving information indexed by subject, or combinations of subjects, such as "nutrition," "vitamins," "labeling," and any other subjects within the system.[5]

The above proposal was accepted unanimously and each cons
experimentally on the automated library catalog and acquis
system while at the same time the library was being built
collection used in traditional form.

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CONCLUSION

The knowledge or organized research and information generated by key individuals within a company constitutes an integral and vital component of the total corporate memory. In their book The Corporate Memory, authors Barbara N. Weavers and Wiley L. Bishop define the Corporate memory as:

> ... the total in-house information systems and services of an organization, which are established to collect, organize, and store efficiently all documentation generated into the company and which have the inherent feature of retrieving documents and/or information on a current and retrospective basis upon demand...[2]

The Peavey Company's interest in encouraging and stimulating personal growth and creativity of its employees reflects the organization's character. The computer specialist and the library specialist utilized this conducive climate to team their professional skills in the development of PERCEIVE. My colleague and I agree that unpredictable benefits were derived through our collective efforts, in designing PERCEIVE and the Peavey Company now has the advantage of an advanced corporate memory.

> ... Collectively, then all record centers and data processing systems within an organization constitute the corporate memory of that organization.[3]

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SOURCE FOOTNOTES

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3. Ibid., p.2.